

WESTERN COMMENTATOR.

"I WISH YOU TO UNDERSTAND THE TRUE PRINCIPLES OF THE GOVERNMENT. I WISH THEM CARRIED OUT. I ASK NOTHING MORE."

VOLUME I.

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The Father's Blessing.

BY MRS. S. A. WHEELLEY.

The wind moaned in low and fitful gusts around the mansion, sounding, at times as if the wailings of departed spirits were borne upon the blast, when Mary Livingston sat alone in the solitude of her chamber. Her lamp was hid in a recess at a distance, and casting its pale and feeble beams across the darkened room, scarcely disclosed her drooping figure, or the tears upon her cheek. It was not that the fearful tumult without had affected her imagination, nor the thought that her only brother might be exposed to all the dangers of the coast. Something that more deeply touched her happiness awoke her grief. Wild, tumultuous thoughts agitated her bosom, and mocked the storm that shook her essence, and roared in all its fury around her.

The substantial mansion of Mr. Livingston was situated in a delightful town in New Jersey. Here he trained up an interesting and lovely family. Four of his daughters were married; three of them were settled in the same town with their father; the other resided in the city of New York. His only son, possessing many virtues, but a wild and roving disposition, had, in opposition to his father's advice, gone to sea, and had not been seen by any of his family for four years. Mary Livingston was the sole remaining daughter at home. She was the sun that lit up her father's dwelling. Swift and light as the fawn, had been her footsteps till of late; when a cloud had passed over the flower and it was changed; but neither the cloud had been seen, nor the blast heard. Then wherefore this change?

It was well known to Mr. Livingston's family, that a strong and bitter alienation of feeling existed between himself and Mr. James, and early, and once dear friend, who at the time of which we speak, resided in New York. So exasperated had Mr. L. become by a series of ungrateful acts, on the part of this early friend, that on pain of his everlasting displeasure, he had forbidden his children ever associating with the family. Unfortunately for Mary, during a visit to the city, she had met with a son of Mr. James, and it was not until her affections were unchangeably fixed, that she had discovered her relationship to the most bitter enemy of her father. Admiring Mary at first, and conscious of the enmity between the families, her lover had sought an introduction to be under a false name, and it was long before she discovered the truth.

When she did so, however, her determination was soon made. Obedience had been the law of her life, and she resolved at once to sacrifice her own feelings in preference to that of her kind father's wishes. She felt pained, moreover, that her lovers should have deceived her even to win her affections. She fled from the scene of danger, but she could not fly from herself. In her own bosom she carried the image she so fondly cherished, and which had been the object of her waking and sleeping dreams. It was after a long struggle, in which she had almost conquered, that she received a letter—which had caused her present grief—written by her sister, and informing her that her lover was about to sail for Europe, and asked for a last interview, if only to beg her forgiveness and bid her farewell forever.

"I will see him," said Mary, "and convince him there is no hope, and then I will return and confess all to my beloved father, and throw myself upon his mercy. He will not cast me off when he finds I did not err knowingly."

She arose from her chair as she thus spoke, arranged her dress, and descended to the parlor, with a countenance from which, except a suspicious eye, every trace of grief had vanished.

"You must not leave us so long again, my daughter," said her venerable father, as she entered the room. "My home appears almost cheerless, unless I hear your voice. Sing to us one of your sweet songs."

"What shall I sing, dear father? Shall it be your favorite, Grace Darling?"

"Not Grace Darling to-night, my love, it is mournful, and tells of shipwreck and death."

"Well, I will sing my own favorite," said Mary, seating herself at the piano, "it shall be

"My heart's in the highlands,
My heart's not here."

The parents looked at each other and smiled, as their beautiful daughter struck the keys; for they felt that few beings were as lovely as their own Mary.

"Dear papa!" said she at length, suddenly stopping, and turning around, "I want to ask a favor of you—I am sure mamma will grant it. There, now, I knew you would—you are always such a kind and indulgent papa," and throwing her arms around her neck, she kissed him tenderly.

"Well, if mamma gives her consent I suppose I must give mine. But, dear Mary, don't come home this time so down hearted as you did from the last visit you paid your sister. There now, since you have got your boon, play me another song."

Mary felt the blood rush to her very brow at this chance remark of her father; but turning around to her piano, she struck into a march, to hide her emotion.

In a few days she set forth to New York, with a heart vacillating between duty and love—determined, however, to permit only one interview, and then to bid her lover adieu forever.

"You will have a strong advocate in my wife," said Mr. M.—to Mr. James, who sat on the sofa by Mary Livingston the evening of her arrival. "She is resolved, she says, to return home with her sister, hoping she may be enabled to soften the feelings of Mr. Livingston toward your father."

"I hope she may prove a successful pleader," said the lover, "and prepare the way for my casting myself at his feet when I return. Since I have obtained my sweet Mary's forgiveness, I feel that I can now with courage brave the hardships of the deep. The thought that she loves me, will be the sun that will light my path in a distant clime. The thought that she is my advocate with her father fills me with the conviction that the ancient enmity will be buried in oblivion and that all will soon be well."

"You are far more sanguine to the result, dear Edward, than I am," said Mary. "I have little hope myself of succeeding with my father. I know his feelings so well on this point, that I tremble lest I have sinned beyond forgiveness. One thing, however, in the presence of these that are so dear, I solemnly declare, though my heart may be crushed, never to unite my destiny with one his judgment disapproves. I should feel a solitary outcast, even rich him I so tenderly love, without a father's blessing."

"We shall have it, dear Mary, we shall have your father's blessing," exclaimed Edward, pressing her to his bosom, "for God will reward so filial and dutiful a daughter. I should feel myself to be a wretch were I to corrupt such purity, or wish you, for my sake, to sacrifice his peace."

We passed over the last two or three hours the lovers passed together. The clock had told the departure of midnight before they separated. Who could blame them for lengthening out an interview that was to be their last for months, and perhaps forever?

"I leave you, dear Mary," said Edward, "in obedience to the commands of my father. If God prospers me, I shall soon again be with you. Cheer up my love, and remember my motto is, 'Brighter days will come.'"

When Edward arrived in London, he hastened to fulfill the object of his voyage, and put his business in a train for a speedy adjustment. Days seemed to him weeks, and Mary could not have doubted his love, had she known there was none in that great metropolis who could eclipse her beauty in the eyes of him she so fondly loved. In about three weeks the business which took him to London was settled. Mr. James was preparing to return home, when one night at a late hour, the cry of "Fire!" resounded through the long halls of the hotel in which he lodged. In an instant all was alarm and confusion. He inquired what part of the building was on fire, and was told that the eastern wing was all in flames. He listened to the scene of danger, which appeared to be entirely forsaken. Nearly suffocated with smoke, he turned to retrace his steps, when a wild scream arrested his attention, and the next instant he beheld a young and beautiful female in her night dress, rushing through the flames.

"Save, oh, save him! for heaven's sake," she exclaimed, "save my sick husband, he is perishing! who, who will rescue him?"

"I will," said Mr. James, "but do not on your peril, attempt to follow me."

In an instant he was lost to sight, but directly reappeared, bearing in a blanket the body of the helpless being he had been the means of snatching from an untimely death. He hastened to his own room, and deposited his burden on the bed, and was administering restoratives, when his servant informed him that the firemen had succeeded in pulling down the eastern wing, and were rapidly extinguishing the flames.

"We have nothing now to fear," said Mr. James, addressing the young female, who had partly shrunk behind the curtains to conceal her thinly clad person—"but you are cold," said he, as he threw his own cloak around her, "pardon my neglect."

"Oh!" she exclaimed, bursting into tears: "talk not of neglect. You have been every thing to us. You have saved the life of my beloved husband, and an age of gratitude is ours."

Edward now left the room to seek rest in another apartment. To sleep was impossible. The excitement of the past hour had been so great that his nervous system was completely unstrung, and he passed the night in listening for some alarm. After breakfast he hastened to the room of the invalid, to inquire for his health. Most joyfully was he greeted by both husband and wife, who now appeared to have recovered from the alarm of the past night. In the course of conversation, Mr. James mentioned that

he was on the eve of starting for America.

"When does the vessel sail?" inquired the lady anxiously.

"This afternoon at four o'clock," replied Mr. J., "and I should like before I say adieu, to become acquainted with the name of those I feel so deep an interest in."

"Our name is Livingston," said the gentleman. "And yours sir?"

"James."

"Well, this is remarkable. A Livingston and a James to meet under circumstances that have bound them together by cords that death alone can sever."

Long and interesting was the communion of that morning. All was told. The gentleman he had rescued was the long absent brother of his own Mary. The tale of love was revealed, and Edward persuaded to wait one week longer, that they might reunite together to their native land.

"I shall send despatches to my father by the vessel in which you expect to sail, this afternoon," said Mr. Livingston, "and if he has any love for his only son, he must receive us as brothers."

We now hasten back to Mary Livingston. After the departure of Edward, New York had lost its attractions for her. Mrs. M.—returned home with Mary. She indulged strong hopes of influencing her father in favor of Mr. James, and inducing him to consent to his union with her sister. But she was destined to be disappointed. Mr. Livingston would not even listen to her. Ringing the bell, he ordered Mary to be summoned to his presence.

When Mary entered the room, her eye fell instantly beneath the steady gaze of her father.

"I have sent for you," said he, "to express my deep displeasure at your conduct, and my utter abhorrence for the man who could impose upon such a child as you. Your sister says you love the son of one that has insulted and abused me. Can it be so, Mary, my child?" said he, bursting into tears.

In a moment Mary was on her knees before him. "Forgive me, dear father: I have sinned ignorantly. Forgive me," she exclaimed, "for I here promise to renounce him forever."

"If this is your determination, rise and receive your father's blessing. May you long enjoy the consolation of knowing you rendered the last days of your father peaceable and happy."

From that hour, Mary Livingston was calm and happy. Innocence and an approving conscience supported her.

"Never," said Mary to her sister, Mrs. M.—on the morning of her departure, mention in your letters, the name of Mr. James, who in future must be as one dead to me. Tell him when he returns, that my determination is unalterable, and bid him seek some more congenial alliance."

Weeks rolled round and found the calm quiet of the Livingston's unbroken. The rose was still blooming on the cheek of Mary. No change had taken place in any except Mr. Livingston. It was very evident to all his friends that he rapidly failed. Every step of the fall he was descending seemed to fatigue him, and the only cord that revived his fading spirit, was the presence of his youngest child. Was not Mary Livingston, as she gazed on his pale face and feeble frame, rejoiced at the sacrifice she had made to secure his peace? Yes, the happiness she now felt, was of a calm, enduring nature. She could be down and rise up without listening to the upbraidings of a guilty conscience, without having to reflect that it was her rebellion that had dimmed the eye and paralyzed the step of her father. Every night before she retired, she received his embrace, and heard him say, "God bless you, Mary, you have been a dutiful child."

Late one evening, in the latter part of October, a servant entered the parlor where the family were sitting, with a package of letters. He delivered them to Mr. Livingston and retired. The hand trembled that broke the seal.

"This is from our dear son," said he turning to his wife, and holding up a letter, "and here is one for each of his sisters. Let me see, two of them are directed to Mary, here they are, take them."

He now commenced reading the letter aloud, which told of the prosperity and marriage of his son, and his intention of leaving England for home the following week. Then came the description of the fire—the peril—the rescue—the name of him who thus exposed his own life to snatch a stranger from the flames. At this part of the letter Mr. Livingston suddenly stopped and left the room. In his study he finished his perusal.

"What does this mean?" he exclaimed, rapidly walking the floor, "it seems as if the hand of God was in this thing. I would that some other one had saved him. He asks me to receive his deliverer as my son. Bold request—and yet I will do it. I will receive him as a son, for he has saved the life of my Walter at the risk of his own. For so generous, so noble an act, I here bury my enmity forever."

Mr. Livingston, with a lighter heart than he had felt for months, returned to the parlor. Mary met him at the door.

"This letter, dear papa," said she, "I re-

turn to you. I have not read it, neither do I desire to. It is written by one I have renounced forever."

"Keep it Mary," said Mr. Livingston, "and cherish the memory of the writer. I have buried my resentment forever toward that family. From this hour shall we not bless the deliverer of our son?"

Mary was astonished. She could scarcely persuade herself that all was not a dream. Still holding the letter toward her father, and gazing immovably in his face, she seemed rather a statue than a human being.

"Do you think I am trifling?" said he, as he pressed her to his bosom. "No, Mary, I love you too well for that. From this moment you have my consent to become the wife of him who, although so tenderly loved, you felt willing to sacrifice to the peace of your aged father."

The intervening days, preceding the arrival of Walter, rapidly glided away in busy preparation. Suddenly, however, Mr. Livingston was taken dangerously ill at midnight. His symptoms were so alarming that a council of physicians was called before morning, when an express was sent to New York for his children.

Calm and collected, Mary Livingston might be seen noiselessly moving about her father's chamber. No hand but hers could administer his medicine, or smooth his pillow. The thought of death—the death of her father—had not once crossed her mind. His life seemed so necessary to his family, that such an event appeared impossible.

"Has he come, Mary?" she gently asked, stooping and kissing his brow.

"Walter, my son, has he come?"

"It is too soon yet to expect him."

"Too soon," said he, faintly, "I fear then I shall never see him. The hand of death is on me, my child, I feel it chill."

"You will kill me, dear father, if you talk so. You will soon be better. I thought this was to be the happiest week of my life," said she, bursting into tears.

"Mary," observed Mr. Livingston, "I wish you to be calm and listen to me. If I should not live to see my son, tell him he was his father's idol. Tell him to transmit the name of Livingston unsullied to posterity, and to be the comfort and support of his widowed mother. One more message and I am done," said he, wiping the cold sweat from off his brow. "Hark!" he exclaimed, hearing a noise, "perhaps that is Walter." Finding himself disappointed, he proceeded, "request Edward James to tell his father that I die in peace with all men, and joyfully entrust the happiness of my daughter to his son. I had hoped to have given away the treasure with my own hand, but this is all over. Leave me now for a few moments, I wish to see your mother."

That interview over, there was a solemn silence for a few moments, when he exclaimed, "Did you say he had come. Oh my son receive my blessing."

"You were dreaming, dear father, said Mary, Walter is not here."

"Well, well, it is all right," he replied. He never spoke more: in a few hours his spirit took its final flight.

It was late in the evening when the mournful intelligence of Mr. Livingston's illness reached his children in New York. They instantly set forth to gain, if possible, his dying couch, in time to obtain his blessing.

"Where is my father?" exclaimed Walter, on his arrival at the mansion, rushing by his mother and sisters who had hastened to the door to meet them. "Lead me to my father," said he, catching hold of Mary.

As she went toward the room, he rushed by her; and entered, closed and locked the door. Mary stood without, listening to his wild outbursts of grief.

In anguish he called upon him once more to speak to him. It was the lamentation of the prodigal yearning in vain to hear his father's voice. It was the pleading of the wanderer who had returned with the hope of cheering his last days.

"Mary," said a gentle, well known voice, "My beloved Mary, we meet with your father's blessing resting upon us."

In an instant she was in the arms of Edward James, and weeping upon his bosom. Walter Livingston at this moment entered the apartment.

"Did my father ask for me, Mary?" said he.

"Oh yes," she replied, "often. Almost his last words were, 'My son, receive my blessing.' And he told me to request you, Edward, to say to your father, 'I die in peace with all men, and willingly entrust the happiness of my daughter to your son.'"

"Father blessed be his memory," said Edward. "Never shall his confidence be misplaced, or that daughter have reason to doubt my trust."

The door now opened, and Mrs. Livingston, leaning on the arm of one of her daughters, entered. "Beloved mother," said Walter, embracing her, "from this hour it shall be my first care and study to promote your comfort. Here by the corpse of my father, I resolve to do all in my power to fill his place, and render your last days peaceful and happy."

Some months from this period, a party was seen to alight from a carriage in front

of Saint Paul's Church. The blessings of many thousands were heard in low murmurs from the crowd that filled the vestibule. "She was the pride of her father," said an aged female who stood leaning against the wall, "and I knew she will be a blessing to her husband."

Early as was the hour, the church was crowded with spectators. Many had risen to get a more perfect view of the fine manly form of him that was about to bear away the sweet Mary Livingston from her maiden home. The silence was intense as the impressive marriage ceremony of the Episcopal Church was read; and fervent prayers were the responses of those who promised through weal and woe to be faithful to each other. As the party turned to leave the Church, a hearty "God bless them," resounded from many. Mrs. James was greatly affected, as she cast a farewell glance on these familiar faces. Her husband hurried her to the carriage.

"The blessing of many has rested on you my dear Mary to-day," said he as they were borne to their new home.

"Yes," said she, "and I thought as I stood before the bridal altar, I heard the voice of my departed father, saying, 'God bless you!'"

Splendid Eruption of a Volcano.

We are indebted (says the Newark Daily Advertiser) to an officer of the Exploring Expedition for files of the *Polynesian*, a useful little paper published at the Sandwich Islands, and transfer the following full account of the last volcanic eruption, which was briefly referred to by our correspondent in a late letter, as having been witnessed by the officers of the squadron:

"Several days before the eruption, smoke was seen by the natives rising from the direction where the lava first burst out, but it was attributed to brush on fire. At 2 o'clock on Sunday, the last day of May, a bright light was seen from Hilo toward the south, which spread with great rapidity and increased to such an intensity that it was immediately attributed to a volcanic eruption. This the reports of the natives soon confirmed. It was judged to be thirty miles distant, and at night such was the brilliancy of the light that the finest print could be read at that distance. This nocturnal brightness, converting night into day, continued for two weeks, and is represented by eye-witnesses to have been a spectacle of unsurpassed sublimity. It was like the glow of a firmament on fire, and was seen for upwards of a hundred miles at sea. It also rose and spread itself above the lofty mountain peaks, so as to be distinctly visible on the leeward side of the island, where the wind drove the smoke in dense and massy clouds.

"The lava continued flowing toward the sea, which it reached on Thursday, four days after its first egress. At times it would rush forward with a velocity of four or five miles per hour, but for a short distance only then becoming very sluggish and move heavily and slowly on. Its general movement was in immense semi-circular masses, owing to its great consistency.

"These would roll on, gradually accumulating, until the mass had become too heavy to hold itself together, while the exterior was partially cooled and solidified: then bursting, the liquid interior flowing out, would join a new stream, and thus aid in forming another. By these accelerated progressive movements the wave-like ridges were formed, which are every where observable on the older currents. At times it forced its way under the circumjacent soil, presenting the singular appearance of earthy rocks and trees in motion like the swell of the ocean. Mr. C. was standing near the stream, and watching its progress, when the land beneath him began to rise, and in a few minutes he was ten feet above his companions who were but a short distance from him. He had barely time to leave this dangerous situation, when the earth opened and lava gushed out. The color of the whole stream was of the deepest crimson. On the windward side its heat was not so powerful but that persons could approach and plunge sticks into the fiery mass and draw forth specimens. So great was its viscosity, that large rocks were seen floating down the water, like cork upon the water. In one night the stream spread from a few rods to half a mile in width.

"The spectacle when this burning mass reached the sea, must have been awful and sublime in the highest degree. The conflict between the two antagonist powers, fire and water, was on a scale which the eye of man seldom witnesses. The heavens were lit up in one intense glare, while streams of fire, like lightning glanced about in every direction. Ashes and sand were thrown to a great height in the air, and descended for miles distant in showers of fiery spray. Volumes of smoke and steam rolled heavily up, rendering the lurid glare still more powerful, while the heavy detonations and loud reports of exploding gasses, and the roar of the conflicting elements were distinctly heard 25 miles off, like discharges of artillery.

"With such rapidity and to such a degree was the water heated, that the following day (June 5th) the fish floated, when dead, as far as Kaua, 15 miles distant, where the water was hot to the touch.